

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W

----- 124897

R 131425Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5494

INFO CINCUSNAVEUR

COMSIXTHFLT

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, US, MARR, OCLR, ASEC

SUBJECT: GOG ANNOUNCES POSSIBLE U.S. MILITARY EXERCISE IN PELOPONNESE

1. DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS, SUNDRY REPORTS HAVE SURFACED IN THE GREEK MEDIA CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME TYPE OF U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE PELOPONNESE AREA OF GREECE. INTERTWINED WITH STORIES PREDICTING THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF SIXTH FLEET

SHIPS WERE CONFUSED REPORTS THAT THE AMERICAN MARINES WOULD BE ENGAGED IN LANDING EXERCISES NEAR THE HISTORIC TOWN OF NAUFPLION. THE LEFTIST PRESS ESPECIALLY PLAYED UP THE POSSIBILITY OF A MARINE INVASION AND HIGHLIGHTED THE "PEOPLE'S EFFORTS" TO ORGANIZE TO OPPOSE THE AMERICAN FLEET AND MARINES.

2. WHEN ASKED ON JULY 2 BY REPORTERS TO COMMENT ON THE ASSORTED STORIES, DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF DENIED THAT LANDING EXERCISES WERE SCHEDULED AT NAUFPLION OR THAT ANY PARTICULAR PRECAUTIONS WERE BEING TAKEN BY THE GOG.

"THERE IS NOT EVEN A TRACE OF TRUTH IN THOSE REPORTS" THE MINISTER IS QUOTED AS HAVING STATED. NEVERTHELESS, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LEFTIST ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA PERSISTED IN KEEPING

THE STORY ALIVE, CONCOCTING ALL SORTS OF IMPLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS AND FABRICATING NON-EXISTENT DATES. ONE VERSION EVEN HAD THE U.S. ESTABLISHING BASES AT PORTO CHELI, A SMALL FISHING VILLAGE -- SUMMER VACATION AREA NEAR THE FAMED RESORT ISLAND OF SPETSES. THEREFORE, TODAY, JULY 13, THE SEMI-OFFICIAL ATHENS NEWS AGENCY BULLETING PUBLISHED AN "OFFICIAL CLARIFICATION" IN WHICH IT COMMENTED ON PRESS REPORTS THAT THE U.S. SIXTH FLEET WOULD CARRY OUT LANDING EXERCISES IN THE NAUFPLION AREA. GOVERNMENT SOURCES STATED THAT NO SUCH EXERCISES HAD EITHER BEEN OR WOULD BE PLANNED. HOWEVER, CONTINUED THE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE "GOVERNMENT SOURCES" IT WAS QUITE LIKELY THAT A LANDING EXERCISE MIGHT BE CARRIED OUT IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PELOPONNESE IN MID-AUGUST, ADDING THAT IN GRANTING PERMISSION FOR SUCH EXERCISES EACH PARTICULAR CASE WAS EXAMINED ON ITS OWN MERITS AND ALL FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST WERE CONSIDERED.

3. COMMENT: THE EXERCISE REFERRED TO BY THE GOG SOURCES IS PHIBLEX 2-7T, SCHEDULED AUGUST 15-22 IN THE AREA OF NEAPOLIS IN THE PELOPONNESE. THE GOG HAS, OF COURSE, GRANTED AUTHORIZATION FOR THIS EXERCISE. IN MAKING ITS MOST RECENT STATEMENT, THE GOG UNDOUBTEDLY HOPES THEREBY TO PREPARE THE TERRAIN FOR HEADING OFF CRITICISM OF THE EXERCISE WHICH THE OPPOSITION MIGHT TRY TO MOUNT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY EXERCISES, PHIBLEX 2-7T
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ATHENS07079
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760270-0188
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760766/aaaacfrt.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 APR 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <23 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOG ANNOUNCES POSSIBLE U.S. MILITARY EXERCISE IN PELOPENNESE
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, OCLR, ASEC, MORG, GR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006